10-8-2003

DDASaccident418

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database
AID

DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date:	19/05/2006	**Accident number:**	418
Accident time:	15:30	**Accident Date:**	08/10/2003
Where it occurred:	Malvil Village, Pallai region, Kilinochi District	**Country:**	Sri Lanka
Primary cause:	Inadequate survey (?)	**Secondary cause:**	Inadequate equipment (?)
Class:	Missed-mine accident	**Date of main report:**	10/10/2003
ID original source:	TG/RS	**Name of source:**	LA
Organisation:	Name removed		
Mine/device:	M15 AT blast	**Ground condition:**	hard route (verge)
Date record created:	21/07/2005	**Date last modified:**	21/07/2005
No of victims:	3	**No of documents:**	2

Map details

Longitude:		**Latitude:**	
Alt. coord. system:	MF HDU-231A & B	**Coordinates fixed by:**	
Map east:		**Map north:**	
Map scale:		**Map series:**	
Map edition:		**Map sheet:**	
Map name:			

Accident Notes

no independent investigation available (?)

inadequate metal-detector (?)

inadequate equipment (?)

Accident report

The demining group involved made available an “incident report” in 2005. They did not class the incident as an “accident”. The incident report was in IMSMA format and is summarised/reproduced below.

The ground was described as “flat, hard and dry”.

“The incident occurred beside the dirt road running through Malvil village exactly 8 metres south of a known cleared area demined by [Demining group]. The task number of the known cleared area is HDU-231A.”

“**Background**

“The village of Malvil has been steadily repopulated since late 2002. Due to a former SLA defensive position running through the middle of the village, mine clearance activities were commenced in November 2002 to enable the local population access to their land. Demining task HDU-231A, located west of the road, was completed at the end of February 2003. HDU-231B, to the east of the road was commenced soon afterwards. A minefield completion report was made for HDU-231A, however at the time of writing, a completion report for demining task HDU 231-B is still pending.

“The village population requested government assistance with the levelling of SLA defensive bunds and clearance of excess vegetation with the aim of gaining full use of their land. The Assistant Government Agent (AGA) in Pallai was tasked by the Government Agent (GA) in Kilinochchi to manage the levelling of bunds in his sub-district. The AGA, realising that demining activities had been conducted around the Malvil village, sought confirmation of the area being free from explosive risk from the Director of the HDU. The HDU Director advised the AGA not to conduct civil works in the village until a final assessment is made on the area and further clearance (if required) is conducted.

“Incident

“A bulldozer and crew contracted by the GA and managed by the AGA was working in Malvil on the day of the incident. [Victim No.1], Bulldozer driver, [Victim No.2], Driver’s Assistant and [Victim No.3], AGA appointed foreman were tasked with levelling the SLA bunds and clearing excess vegetation around the village. Immediately prior to the incident the bulldozer was on the dirt road running through the village and attempting to turn around. As the bulldozer moved off the road in its attempt to turn, an explosion occurred under the right hand track, tipping the bulldozer over and throwing the three contractors away from the site.

[The picture above shows the bulldozer after the accident.]

“NOTE: A HDU demining team working approximately 1 km from the incident site sent their medic to provide precautionary treatment to the personnel present at the scene of the incident. 3 of the 4 people present were sent to Killinochchi hospital for further examination. At time of writing, no further treatment was required.

Minor injuries were sustained by the contractors, however precautionary treatment was given by a HDU medic. The contractors were then sent to Kilinochchi hospital for a more thorough precautionary check.

“Additional Information

“The crater made by the explosion was shaped like a large funnel, approximately 1 metre deep, with a bottom diameter of approximately 30 centimetres and a top diameter of approximately 1.5 metres.

“Thin metal fragments were found in the crater left by the explosion. These fragments are consistent with that of an M-15 anti tank mine commonly used by the SLA.

[The picture above shows the recovered fragments.]

“The AT mine was situated in between the defensive bund and the AP minefield previously cleared by [Demining group] approximately 1 metre from the edge of the road.

“The contractors reported hearing a small explosion under the track of the bulldozer approximately ½ an hour prior to the incident. Two locations were identified by two different men, one 23 metres and one 35 metres east of the village road. Investigations revealed no physical evidence to confirm an explosion occurred at either location.

“Conclusion

“It is apparent that the direct pressure from the bulldozer activated a metallic anti-tank mine, while driving off the edge of a well used road. The mine appears to have been an M-15 anti-tank mine laid by the SLA as part of their defences in Malvil Village.

“Recommendations

“Anti-tank mines, although not in abundance, are a real threat along many roads in the Vanni. As most of the roadways are already in use, the real danger exists along the sides of the roads, within 2 metres from the edge of the road, anywhere up to 100 metres forward of the SLA defensive bund. The Anti-tank mines are not usually located during the clearance of anti-personnel minefields as they are laid separately to the AP minefield.

“Risk assessments conducted prior to mine clearance activities should include a consideration of anti-tank mines in the task area.

“Additionally, an electronic means of efficiently locating anti-tank mines should be considered to enhance the capability of [Demining group] deminers in the Vanni.”

Victim Report

Victim number: 545 **Name: Name removed**

Age: **Gender:** Male

Status: driver **Fit for work:** yes

Compensation: Not made available **Time to hospital:** Not recorded.

Protection issued: None **Protection used:** None

Summary of injuries:

COMMENT

No medical report was made available. The Victim suffered light "bruising".

Victim Report

Victim number: 546 **Name:** **Name removed**

Age: **Gender:** Male

Status: civilian **Fit for work:** yes

Compensation: Not made available **Time to hospital:** Not recorded

Protection issued: None **Protection used:** None

Summary of injuries:

COMMENT

No medical report was made available. The victim suffered "bruising and a light cut".

Victim Report

Victim number: 547 **Name:** **Name removed**

Age: **Gender:** Male

Status: civilian **Fit for work:** yes

Compensation: Not made available **Time to hospital:** Not recorded

Protection issued: None **Protection used:** None

Summary of injuries:

COMMENT

No medical report made available. The victim suffered "minor bruising".

Statements

Most statements and supporting documents were not made available. One statement was included and is reproduced below, edited for anonymity.

Statement by Assistant to bulldozer driver, dated 10th October 2003

On the 8th of October 2003, I was working in the village of Malvil helping with the levelling of bunds with a bulldozer. At about 3:30 PM I was sitting on the bulldozer next to the driver when

there was an explosion underneath the right side of the bulldozer. I was thrown off the bulldozer along with the driver, [Name excised]. After picking myself up from the ground I saw the bulldozer had been tipped over and there was a large hole in the ground the explosion happened.

Signed: Assistant to bulldozer driver

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as "*Inadequate survey"* because the demining group had not assessed the risk in the area appropriately, as was acknowledged in the demining group's internal investigation. The secondary cause is listed as *"Inadequate equipment"* because the demining group did not have the metal-detectors that would have made the search for large metal-cased AT mines relatively fast (also acknowledged in the investigation where the investigator recommended that metal-detectors be sourced for this purpose.) When visited in 2005 the demining group still operated without metal-detectors.